Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) An audio/video system, comprising:

a local area network having a data network, a control bus, and a plurality of nodes;

a plurality of audio/video appliances each having available audio/video presentations, said audio/video appliances respectively operatively connected to said plural nodes for transmitting information about the available audio/video presentations to said local area network;

at least one audio/video output unit for outputting audio/video signals;

a control unit having a control program and a memory which stores the information about the audio/video presentations transmitted by said audio/video appliances and classifies the information into classes;

an operating unit connected to said control unit; and

a visual output unit operatively arranged for displaying the classified information about the available audio/video presentations independently of the audio/video appliances, thereby creating an appliance-independent user interface.

2. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein each class includes at least one subclass and wherein said audio/visual output unit displays the classes, the subclasses for a selected class and names for ones of said audio/video presentations in a selected class and subclass.

3. (previously presented) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said operating unit comprises means for selecting a selected one of the available audio/video presentations independently of the appliances and means for automatically retrieving the selected one of the available audio/video presentations using said control unit, such that all of said A/V appliances are operable using said operating unit.

4. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said at least one audio/video output unit further comprising a plurality of audio/video output units for outputting audio/video signals.

5. (original) The audio/video system of claim 4, wherein said operating unit comprises means for selecting one of said plural audio/visual output units.

6. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of operating units connected to said control unit.

7. (original) The audio/video system of claim 6, wherein each of said plural operating units is assigned a priority.

8. (original) The audio/video system of claim 7, wherein a selection made using one of said plural operating units having a relatively high priority is prevented from being modified by another operating unit having a lower priority.

9. (original) The audio/video system of claim 3, wherein said control unit is operatively arranged for assigning a priority to each of said plural audio/video appliances.

10. (original) The audio/video system of claim 9, wherein at least two of said plural audio/video appliances have the selected one of the available audio/video presentations and said control unit comprises means for connecting the one of said at least two of said plural audio/video appliances having the highest priority to said at least one audio/video output unit.

11. (original) The audio/video system of claim 3, wherein said control unit comprises means for reducing a volume when the selected one of the available audio/video presentations is changed.

12. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said operating unit comprises a start playback function, a stop playback function and a change volume function.

13. (previously presented) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said local area network comprises an ring network.

14. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said audio/video system is in a motor vehicle.

15. (original) The audio/video system of claim 14, wherein at least one of said plural audio/video appliances is operatively arranged for reading map data for a navigation system.

16. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said audio/video system comprises a home multimedia system.

17. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein one of said classes comprises radio and TV stations.

18. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein one of said classes comprises a type of audio/video presentations.

19. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein one of said classes comprises music titles.

20. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein one of said classes is for information which is not continuously available.

21. (previously presented) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein a single audio/video presentation is assigned to a plurality of classifications.

22. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said local area network comprises an open system.

23. (previously presented) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said control unit comprises virtual interfaces for each of said plural audio/video appliances.

24. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said control program comprises a plurality of service modules.

25. (original) The audio/video system of claim 24, wherein said plural service modules comprise:

a first service module for selecting a suitable audio/video appliance for playing back the selected audio/video presentation;

a second service module for selecting and managing said at least one output unit;

a third service module for connecting the network's node addresses stipulated by the selections of the first and second service modules; and

a fourth service module which requests the functions of said first, second, and third service modules.

26. (original) The audio/video system of claim 1, wherein said control program comprises a registration module for registering newly connected audio/video appliances.

27. (previously presented) A method for operating a local multimedia system having a plurality of audio/video appliances, including the steps of:

(a) transmitting information about available audio/video presentations from the audio/video appliances to a control unit using a local network connecting the audio/video appliances and the control unit, the information including one or more classifications of the audio/video presentations;

(b) processing, at the control unit, the information about the available audio/video presentations into classes using the classifications independently of the appliances;

(c) outputting the information about the available audio/video presentations which has been processed into classes independently of the appliances onto a visual output unit;

(d) selecting, using an operating unit connected to the control unit, one of the available audio/video presentations, and selecting, by the control unit, an audio/video appliance which is suitable for playing back the selected audio/video presentation;

(e) connecting, by the control unit, the selected audio/video appliance to an output unit; and

(f) playing back the selected audio/video presentation via the output unit.

28. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein said step (a) comprises transmitting a classification, a subclass and a name by the audio/video appliances as information about the available audio/video presentation.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein said step (e) comprises selecting a selected audio/video output unit from a plurality of available audio video/output units using the operating unit and connecting the selected audio/video output unit to the audio/video appliance selected in said step (d) by the control unit, such that all of said A/V appliances are operable using said operating unit.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the local multimedia system comprises a plurality of operating units, said method further comprising the step of assigning a priority to each of the operating units, and modifying a selection made using a first operating unit with a first priority only if it is done using an operating unit with the same or higher priority.

31. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of assigning priorities to the audio/video appliances and said step (d) comprises selecting, by the control unit, the audio/video appliance with the selected audio/video presentation and which has the highest priority.

32. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of changing the currently selected audio/visual presentation using the operating unit;

selecting, by the control unit, the audio/video appliance which is suitable for playing back the newly selected audio/video presentation;

reducing the volume of the audio output unit from an original;

connecting the newly selected audio/video appliance to the audio output unit;

outputting the newly selected audio/video presentation via the audio output unit; and

returning the volume back to the original level.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein said step (a) comprises transmitting the information in a ring network.

34. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein the classifications include a classification for radio and TV stations, a classification for the type of audio and/or video presentation available, a classification for music titles, and a classification for information which is not continuously available.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said step (a) comprises transmitting the information about a single available audio/video presentation including more than one classification, and allocating the single audio/video presentation to more than one class on the basis of the more than one classifications.

36. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein the number of classes in said step (b) is expandable.

37. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of connecting the audio/video appliances and the control unit by virtual interfaces before said step (a).

38. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein said step (a) comprises transmitting the information to the control unit which includes a control program having a plurality of service modules.

39. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein said step (d) comprises selecting a suitable audio/video appliance for playing back the selected audio/video presentation by a first service module of the control program.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein said step (e) comprises selecting the output unit managing the output unit by a second service module.

41. (original) The method of claim 40, further comprising the step of connecting the audio/video appliance selected by the first service module and the output unit selected by the second service module by a third service module.

42. (original) The method of claim 41, further comprising the step of requesting services of the first, second, and third service modules by a fourth service module.

43. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of automatically registering a newly introduced audio/video appliance newly introduced into the multimedia system in a registration module.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed April 8, 2005 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-43 are pending in this application, with claims 1 and 27 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed April 8, 2005, the specification is objected to because there is a discrepancy between pages 14 and 15. The previous amendment attempted to correct this but incorrectly indicated page 1, line 1. The above amendment to the specification correctly indicates that the paragraph starting on page 15, line 1, should be replaced. In view of the above amendments and remarks, the objection to the specification should now be withdrawn.

Claim 30 is objected to as containing a minor informality. Claim 30 included an amendment but was incorrectly listed as "original". In the above listing, claim 30 is correctly listed as "previously presented". Accordingly, the objection to claim 30 should now be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17-21, 27-29, 32, and 34-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,574,514 (Tanihira) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,232,539 (Looney) and U.S. Patent No. 5,973, 722 (Wakai).

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,141,036 (Katayama).

Claims 7, 8, and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,751,581 (Ishiguro).

Claims 9, 10, 24, 25, 31, and 38-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,526,581 (Edson).

Claims 22, 23, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of WO 99/35009 (Beckert).

Claims 26 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,157,725 (Becker).

Claims 13, 16, and 33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Looney, and Wakai in view of EP 0 560 593 (Kawamura).

Independent claims 1 and 27 each recite that the audio/video appliances are connected to a local area network and that each of the audio/video appliances transmit information about the available audio/video presentations to said local area network. It is respectfully submitted that the combined teachings of Tanihira, Looney and Wakai fail to teach or suggest this limitation.

Tanihira discloses an audio/video device for a communication system in which a plurality of audio/visual devices are interconnected by a bus. Fig. 2 of Tanihira shows a bus 71 connecting various A/V devices 31-36, 41, and 43. Tanihara also discloses how the controllers SCU 21 or commanders 11, 12 use addresses to communicate with the individual A/V devices (col. 6, line 57 to col. 7, line 57). Col. 7, lines 50-57 of Tanihira specifically lists the various control buttons or keys on the commanders 11, 12 for controlling the various devices. The commanders 11, 12 are analogous to universal remote control units which include controls for TV, VCR, and DVD. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Tanihira fails to teach or suggest that the audio/video appliances transmit information about the available audio/video presentations to said local area network.

Looney discloses a single A/V appliance, i.e., music organizer, for organizing music stored in a database in the single A/V appliance. Looney discloses at col. 6, line 27 to col.

8, line 18 the method for categorizing and making available individual songs. Col. 6, line 27 to col. 7, line 32 describes a specific embodiment for adding songs in which a user selects songs from a database owned by a service provider (col. 6, line 62 to col. 7, line 6), the service provider creates a CD which is sent to the user (col. 7, lines 25-28), and the user saves the songs from the CD into the database of the music organizer (col. 7, line 43 to col. 8, line 4). Instead of being collected from a CD. the songs stored in the database may be collected from various sources as disclosed at col. 7, lines 27-37. The saved songs in the database on the music organizer (i.e., the single A/V appliance) are displayed to the user (col. 8, lines 3-4). Accordingly, Looney discloses only that a list of songs in a database of the music organizer is presented to a user by a display on the music organizer.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Looney that the A/V appliance transmits available presentations to a local area network. Rather, Looney discloses only one A/V appliance which displays to a user the contents of a database of the A/V appliance on a display which is incorporated in the A/V appliance. If the teachings of Looney were incorporated in the system of Tanihira, then the individual units, i.e., the cassette player 32, the CD player 33, the DAT player 34, etc., of Tanihira would each display the presentations available. There is no teaching or suggestion for a device that transmits information of available presentations to a network that the device is connected to.

The Examiner states that Looney teaches that the information is sent to a controller and that this is the controller 11a in the commander 11 of Tanihira. However, Looney does not disclose that an A/V appliance transmits information about available presentations to a local area network, as expressly recited in independent claims 1 and 27. Rather, Looney discloses that the information is sent to a controller within the device of Looney. As shown in

Fig. 3A of Tanihira, each unit of Tanihira includes a separate controller. Accordingly, if the teachings of Looney were applied to Tanihira, then information about the available selections of a device would be sent to the controller of that device displayed on a display of that device.

"To imbue one of ordinary skill in the art with knowledge of the invention in suit, when no prior art reference or references of record convey or suggest that knowledge, is to fall victim to the insidious effect of a hindsight syndrome in which that which only the inventor taught is used against its teacher." *See* W.L. Gore & Assocs. V. Garlock, Inc., 721 F.2d 1540, 1553, 220 USPQ 303, 312-13 (Fed. Cir. 1983). In the present case, there is no disclosure, teaching, or suggestion in Tanihira or Looney for transmitting information about available selections to a network to which the appliance is connected, as expressly recited in independent claims 1 and 27. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over Tanihara in view of Looney.

Wakai also fails to teach or suggest the limitation. Wakai discloses a digital audio/visual on demand and broadcast distribution system. More specifically, Wakai discloses an in-flight entertainment system in which content to be stored is entered via floppy disk drive, CD ROM, or a magnetic tape drive (col. 6, lines 8-17 of Wakai). The content is stored to one of a plurality of head end servers 100 including a data server 102, a media controller 104, and media servers 106, 108 (see also col. 5, lines 35-50). Wakai discloses that the control data used to configure and control the in-flight system is loaded into the system through floppy disks (col. 12, line 66 to col. 13, line 6). A list of available content is maintained in the media controller 104 and is updated when the content of the media servers is changed (col. 19, lines 33-36). Since the content of the media servers 106 and 108 is loaded into the media controller 104, Wakai fails to disclose separate A/V appliances which transmit the information about available presentations to a local area network, as expressly recited in independent claims 1 and 27.

The Office Action states that each server is considered to be a different source and that the media controller 104 maintains a list of all material independent of the source. However, even if the servers 102, 104, 106, and 108 are considered to be different sources, the server can not be considered different A/V appliances as recited in independent claims 1 and 27, because Wakai states that the media controller 104 maintains a list of the content in the media servers 106, 108.

In view of the above remarks, independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the combined teachings of Tanihara, Looney and Wakai.

Dependent claims 2-26 and 28-43, each being dependent on one of independent claims 1 and 27, are deemed allowable for at least the same reasons expressed above with respect to independent claims 1 and 27, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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